

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action identified above, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 9-13¹, and 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Small (U.S. Patent No. 6,522,654) in view of Martin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,614,788); and objected to claims 5-8 and 14-17 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 5-8 and 14-17 recite allowable subject matter. Applicant believes that claims 1-4, 9-13, and 18-19 also recite allowable subject matter and reserves the right to pursue the rejected claims in a continuation application. However, to expedite prosecution of this case, Applicant proposes to amend claim 1 to incorporate subject matter of objected to claims 5 and amend claims 10 and 19 to incorporate subject matter of objected to claim 14. Applicant also proposes to amend claims 4, 6, 9, 13, 15, 17, and 18 to maintain antecedent basis and improve readability where appropriate. In addition, Applicant proposes to cancel claims 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject of record. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the above noted claim amendments do not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1, 4, 6-10, 13, and 15-19 in condition for allowance.

¹ Although the Office Action on page 2 indicates claim 14 was also rejected, page 5 of the Office Action indicates that claim 14 contains allowable subject matter. After review of the claims, the references, and the entire Office Action, Applicant assumes that the Examiner considers that claim 14 recites allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and a timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 9, 2005

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